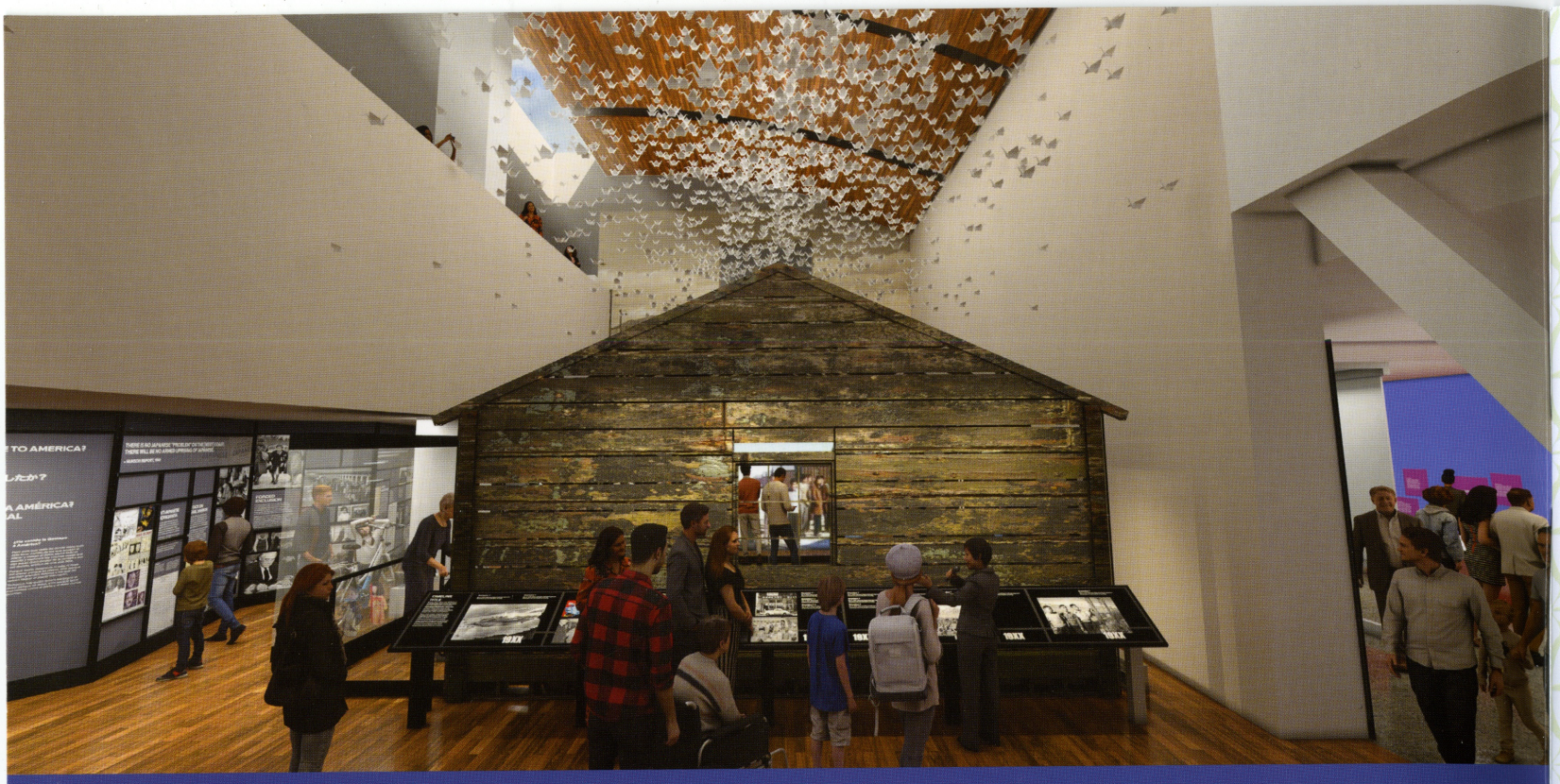
April 25, 2026

The 57th Annual MANZANAR PILGRIMAGE

Lessons from Manzanar: Vigilance is the Price of Democracy

THE MANZANAR COMMITTEE

www.ManzanarCommittee.org



Congratulations to the Manzanar Committee on the 57th Manzanar Pilgrimage!

JANM reopening in late 2026!

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janm JAPANESE AMERICAN NATIONAL MUSEUM

57th Annual Manzanar Pilgrimage
April 25, 2026

PROGRAM

Call to Order

UCLA Kyodo Taiko

Ken Koshio

Banner Procession

Welcome from Emcees
Maiya Kuida Osumi and Tony Osumi

Welcome
Jeremiah Joseph,
Cultural Resources Protection for the Paiute-Shoshone Tribe

Jeremy Scheier, *Superintendent MNHS*

Opening Remarks
Bruce Embrey,
Chair of the Manzanar Committee

Keynote Address
Dale Minami

Musical Interlude
UCLA Kyodo Taiko

Council on American-Islamic Relations-CA
Hussam Ayloush

Terminal Island
Paul Boyea

Student Speaker
Jennifer Yamashita, UCLA

Musical Interlude

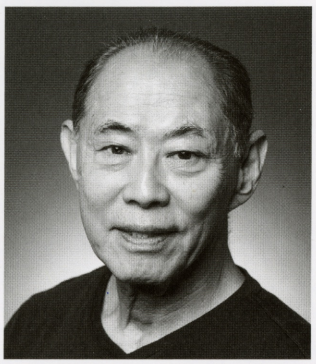
Camp Roll Call and Banner Procession
Monica Embrey

Procession to the Monument / Interfaith Service

Cover art design by Alvin Takamori

Keynote Speaker

Dale Minami



Dale Minami is an attorney and a Founder of the law firm, Minami Tamaki LLP in San Francisco. He has handled a wide range of cases, but is most recognized for his involvement in significant litigation involving the civil rights of Asian Pacific Americans and other minorities, including *Korematsu v. United States* (a petition to overturn convictions for refusing exclusion and detention orders affirmed by the US Supreme Court in 1944), *United Pilipinos for Affirmative Action v. California Blue Shield* (the first class action employment lawsuit brought by Asian Pacific Americans for APA's), *Spokane JACL v. Washington State University* (a class action lawsuit for APA's which established an Asian American Studies program at Washington State University), and *Nakanishi v. UCLA* (a claim for unfair denial of tenure which resulted in the granting of tenure).

Minami was born in East Los Angeles at the Japanese Hospital and lived in Gardena. He attended USC and received his law degree from U.C. Berkeley. He was a founder of the Asian Law Caucus, a community interest law firm and was involved in the Redress movement and many other Civil Rights issues supporting marginalized groups. He was the Chair of the Civil Liberties Public Education Fund, appointed by President Clinton. Dale has received acknowledgements for his work including the American Bar Association's highest award, the ABA Medal, as well as the Thurgood Marshall and Spirit of Excellence Awards, the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association Trailblazer Award, a dorm named after him at U.C. Santa Cruz, and a Public Interest Fellowship in his name at Berkeley Law. He has also received Honorary Degrees from the McGeorge and the USF Schools of Law. Dale attended his first Manzanar Pilgrimage in 1972. He now lives in San Francisco, is married to Judge Ai Mori, has two teenage kids, and a dog of unknown ancestry.

Remembering Kathy Bancroft

Kathy Jefferson Bancroft was an ally, educator, tireless advocate for Indigenous rights and a fierce defender of her homeland, Payahuunadü (Owens Valley). As Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone Tribe, she worked alongside the Manzanar Committee to stop the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) from building a solar ranch adjacent to Manzanar National Historic Site. Bancroft also led the fight to defend Conglomerate Mesa—an area of land near Owens Lake—from being destroyed by mining companies seeking to exploit the land.

Wendi Yamashita is the Director of Katari, a partnership between the Manzanar Committee and the National Park Service that mentors college Nikkei about Japanese American history and community building. She recalled, "For many years, Kathy welcomed Manzanar Pilgrimage participants to Payahuunadü reminding us whose land we are on and how we are all connected and responsible to each other. Kathy also spoke at our Katari program, explaining how white settlers brutally oppressed the Paiute and Shoshone people to exploit the land and resources of Payahuunadü."

In a recent interview with Charlotte Cotton of Metabolic Studio, Bancroft reflected on her motivation for advocating and preserving Payahuunadü: "The way we look at it, this whole valley is sacred. Here is where my ancestors walked—on every part of this valley. That's who makes me who I am, that's where I get my strength from. They're all still here. There are places where special things happen and places where terrible things have happened…Outsiders have been here a little over one hundred years, but we'll still be here long after everybody else is gone. And we've got to clean up the mess, so we're going to start now."

Kathy Jefferson Bancroft with Manzanar Committee Chair Bruce Embrey

A Commentary on Rachel Maddow's Burn Order Podcast

by Bruce Embrey, Chair of Manzanar Committee

I think it's important to acknowledge that having someone of Rachel Maddow's stature produce a comprehensive and thorough podcast is worthy of praise. *Burn Order* wasn't a quick, superficial podcast. It was months in the making. Michael Yarvitz, one of the producers/writers, attended the 2025 Manzanar Pilgrimage in April, where Satsuki Ina was our keynote speaker.

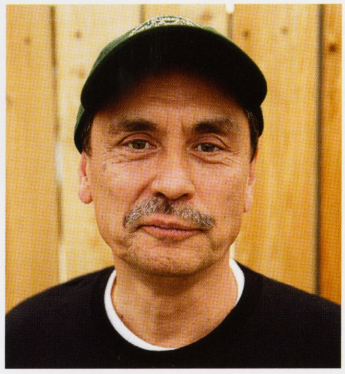


Photo by Patrick T. Fallon.

Furthermore, Rachel and her team did an excellent job of showing how powerful interests set out to disrupt or destroy the economic lifeblood of the Nikkei community, using the federal government to achieve their objectives. The podcast lays bare how white nationalist groups, like the Native Sons of the American West, and others, played a key role in the WWII forced removal. She shows how powerful corporate interests, like the Western Growers Protective association and others, were able to profit from state violence and the "racial cleansing" advocated by white nationalists. Just like today with Corecivic, Palantir, and other major corporations profiting from the Trump administration's war on democracy.

My mother and the Manzanar Committee argued that economics was a key factor during WWII. And when crafting the language for the Manzanar State Historic Landmark in 1972, we included the term 'economic exploitation.' That wording received as much push back as 'concentration camp.'

But, I think the real value of Burn Order is that it does a magnificent job drawing parallels between the current moment in our country and our community's WWII story, especially the role of the state in oppressing immigrant and communities of color, as well as the fragility of our democratic rights. I think it's important to congratulate Rachel and her team on how *Burn Order* explains these parallels. As she says, 'History is here to help us in times of crisis.' Our community's story of the forced removal through the Redress Movement offers evidence that movements can win, and that, despite the fragility of our democracy, we can defend our basic rights.

As the assault on our democracy, the militarization of our cities, and the building of massive concentration camps unfolds, we need to come together, like we did during the Redress Movement and fight like hell for our democracy. That's why I believe Rachel Maddow's *Burn Order* is a serious and valuable contribution to our efforts to save our democracy.

Bruce Embrey is the Chair of the Manzanar Commitee. This article first appeared in the collection of responses *Japanese American Community Excitement and Opinion about Rachel Maddow's Burn Order* on the Densho website https://densho.org/catalyst/community-burn-order/.

Manzanar Overview

Manzanar was one of ten long-term concentration camps established by the federal government to hold the 110,000 West Coast Japanese Americans who had been forcibly removed from their homes in the spring and summer of 1942. Japanese Americans—over 60% of whom were native born American citizens—were evicted and incarcerated without charge or trial strictly on the basis of having Japanese ancestry. Forty years later, a congressionally appointed commission concluded that the root causes of the roundup were "race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership." Ultimately, over 125,000 Japanese Americans would be incarcerated.

Manzanar was the first of the concentration camps to be specifically built to hold Japanese Americans, opening on March 21, 1942 as the "Owens Valley Reception Center" under the management of Wartime Civil Control Administration, a civilian branch of the U.S. Army. After about ten weeks, War Relocation Authority, a civilian agency newly created to administer the concentration camps, took over the renamed "Manzanar Relocation Center."

The first Manzanar Pilgrimage, December 1969. Courtesy of Manzanar National Historic Site and the Evan Johnson Collection.

A total of over 11,000 individuals were held at Mananar (with a peak population of just over 10,000). Inmates lived in crudely constructed wooden barracks without running water that were furnished only with cots and an oil burning stove. The camp was surrounded by a barbed wire fence and eight guard towers. Entire families lived in a single barracks room. Inmates ate, bathed, and toileted communally in buildings separate from

Girls playing outside the barracks. Courtesy of Manzanar National Historic Site and the Martha Shoaf Collection.

living quarters. Despite the difficult conditions and unjust confinement, inmates did their best to make Manzanar as livable as possible, building furniture out of scrap lumber, planting gardens, and organizing such recreation activities as sports leagues, dances, and movie screenings. It was also the site of significant unrest, most notably what has been called both a "riot" and an "uprising" in December 1942 that saw military police firing into a crowd of inmates resulting in two deaths and many injuries.

Eventually, inmates deemed "loyal" by the government were allowed to leave Manzanar, but initially only for destinations away from the West Coast. When eligibility to serve in the army was restored to Japanese Americans, Manzanites were among those who volunteered or who were drafted. Though the war ended in August 1945, Manzanar remained open for three more months. The last inmates left on November 21, 1945.

In December 1969, Los Angeles area activists organized the first public pilgrimage to any of the American-style concentration camps, and about 150 people gathered at the Manzanar site on December 27, 1969. The Manzanar Committee, organized after that first pilgrimage has put on annual pilgrimages ever since

Manzanar also became the first such site to have a historical landmark plaque in 1973, and in 1992 it became the first site to become a unit of the National Park Service. Since that time, the NPS has managed and interpreted the Manzanar National Historic Site.

Key Facts About Manzanar

Location: In the Owens Valley, just east of the Sierra Nevada range in east-central California. Built along Highway 395, about five miles south of Independence, ten miles north of Lone Pine, and 225 miles north of Los Angeles.

Elevation: The average elevation of Manzanar is about 3,900 feet

Size and layout: The inmate area of Manzanar was about one mile square and divided into thirty-six residential blocks, each of which consisted of fourteen barracks, a mess hall, a recreation hall, two latrines, a laundry room, and an ironing room. Each block held between 250 and 300 people.

Population: Manzanar's peak population was 10,046 on September 22, 1942. A total of 11,062 inmates were held at Manzanar at one time or another.

Demographics: Manzanar's incarceree population mostly came from the Los Angeles area, with about 72% coming from the city of Los Angeles and 88% from Los Angeles county. Significant minority populations included groups from Bainbridge Island in Washington and Florin and French Camp in California, all of which were farming communities outside of Seattle, Sacramento, and Stockton respectively.

Births: 541

Deaths: 146

Arrival of first inmates: March 21, 1942

Departure of final inmates: November 21, 1945

Camp Newspaper: *The Manzanar Free Press*, first issued dated April 11, 1942, final issue dated October 19, 1945

Number sent to Tule Lake: 2,165. Manzanar sent the largest number of incarcerees of any WRA camp to Tule Lake as part of the segregation process. Jerome sent a slightly higher percentage of its peak population.

Volunteers for armed forces: 42

Percentage of citizen males eligible for military service who volunteered: 5.4, slightly below the figure for all camps of 5.8

Draft resisters: none

Manzanar, Tule Lake, Topaz, Heart Mountain, Minidoka,
Amache, Gila River, Poston, Rohwer, Jerome, DOJ, Army
The World War II Camp Wall Monument memorializes the hardship of all who the U.S. government unjustly imprisoned during the WWII era.
WORLD WAR II CAMP WALL
www.WWIIcampwall.org

Summer at Manzanar: Reflections on the Gann Matsuda Memorial Internship

by Natalie Kong Tokita

This past summer, I had the honor to serve as the inaugural Gann Matsuda Memorial Intern at the Manzanar National Historic Site in conjunction with the Manzanar Committee and National Park Service. For eight weeks, I worked to pass on the stories of Manzanar to thousands of visitors, ranging from camp survivors themselves to travelers passing through the valley. I was truly humbled to work in the late Gann Matsuda's name, as he worked tirelessly in the fight to establish Manzanar as a National Historic Site. Gann always emphasized the importance of student activism, and so I was truly honored to play just a small role in continuing his legacy.

Living in Payahuunadü, the Owens Valley, was very different from the fast-paced urban college life to which I had grown accustomed. It was lonely but peaceful, a quiet break from the hustle of smog and traffic jams, characterized by the most beautiful seven-minute commute from Independence along the purple Sierras lining Highway 395. I had heard many former incarcerees remark that the first thing they noticed at Manzanar was the beauty in the natural landscape, and it was easy to see why.

Of course, just under the mountains, my job was to tell the story of the Japanese American incarceration. Sometimes, the storytellers themselves would visit in the form of survivors and descendants, sharing long-lost memories of what their ancestors told them about their experiences in camp. My most prominent memories stemmed from these interactions as I helped families find their Final Accountability Rosters. Though these government-administrated documents only provided small pieces of the long-winded narrative of incarceration, these moments were the most emotional for visitors who had previously thought that their stories were not of importance. I had the opportunity to help them realize the fortunate truth that I did when I attended my first pilgrimage: that there are so many who recognize and condemn the injustices committed by the United States against Japanese Americans, and that despite it all, our community still stands strong today.

But these injustices are in no way left behind in the past, as the story of Manzanar is still facing erasure today. Many commented on the NPS-issued feedback forms installed in the visitor center, which condemned any "negative information" which detracted from the beauty of the American landscape.

Author (left) with Manzanar park rangers Emily Teraoka (middle) and Sarah Bone (right).

They asked me how these signs could possibly be posted at sites like Manzanar, a site commemorating the suffering of tens of thousands of innocent lives. They asked me how this country could make tens of thousands more suffer as ICE kidnaps innocent lives and imprisons them in detention camps not so different from Manzanar's. And though I was instructed to only respond within the confines of Manzanar's historical context, I find it impossible to separate past suffering from present injustice.

Even though I have spent so much time at Manzanar now, I recognize that I still have so much to learn, and so much work to continue doing. Now more than ever, vigilance is truly the price of democracy, as we must be alert to the injustices being actively committed against minority communities in the United States, and fight to preserve our rights. May the past stories of unjust incarceration remind us that what happened to our Japanese American ancestors should never happen again, to any community.

Natalie Kong Tokita is a third-year undergraduate student at UCLA studying Human Biology and Society and Asian American Studies. In addition to having worked the Matsuda internship, she is a current co-director for Kyodo Taiko at UCLA, a former Youth Fellow for the Minidoka Pilgrimage, and a past recipient of the Arnold Maeda Manzanar Pilgrimage Grant.

Never Again: People and Places Will Not Be Erased
A National Day of Action

by Louis Watanabe

The Japanese American Community is no stranger to lies and hysteria. During WWII, we experienced Executive Order 9066 and the invocation of the Alien Enemies Act that resulted in the incarceration of over 120,000 Japanese, the majority being born American citizens like my parents, aunts and uncles. While we have received reparations and an official apology from the U.S. government through the help of many allies, the trauma still lingers through generations. Today we see this mistake being repeated with the incarceration and mass deportation of immigrants to the detriment of our country. Never Again is Now!

Last year we were dismayed by staff reductions and budget cuts to the National Park Service which threatened access to our historical & cultural site but worse was the introduction of park signs with QR codes inviting the public to report negative or unpatriotic exhibits as an attempt to censor or rewrite our history. Although the public pushed back to this Administration, we weren't the only ones under attack. With this Administration trying to erase or revise civil rights, Black, LGBTQ, and Indigenous stories to fit a white supremist vision, the Japanese American community received a blessing from an unexpected group.

In late 2024, Dennis Arguelles from the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) approached the Manzanar Committee to explore working together in anticipation of attacks from the Trump administration. As we met though the early months of 2025, we invited leaders from other Japanese American Incarceration sites to strategize our plans as cuts to the National Park Service and ICE raids came into full effect. By July, NPCA was proposing that we participate in a National Park Action with their message: "Protect Every Park."

We had a little more than a month to orgainze this event and it became clear that we needed to expand our message and recruit other organizations to join us. On Aug 23rd, Manzanar, the Seattle Waterfront, Tule Lake, the Japanese American National Museum in Little Tokyo and a virtual Amache stood with the National Parks Conservation Association and the other national parks and cultural sites.

For Los Angeles, the decision by the Japanese American National Museum to offer its plaza was important because it was a historic site where Japanese Americans were rounded up during World War 2 to be taken to concentration camps. It was also the site where just one week earlier Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) and ICE used a press conference by Governor Newsom to intimidate the public in a show of force and in the process, abducted a worker who was making deliveries.

Kyoko Oda speaking at the National Day of Action at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles. Photo by Mike Palma.

To fill the plaza, we asked members of the Summer of Resistance coalition, including CLUE and CHIRLA. We worried about ICE or the Border Patrol showing up so we came up with contingency plans with security. We tried to make the event more entertaining by including taiko drummers, printed fans with the words "Never Again Is Now" and strings of folded paper cranes. We were also joined in solidarity with Seth Johson of the Gabrieleno San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians who welcomed us to the land.

Attendance at Little Tokyo was over 500, at the Seattle Waterfront almost 500, at Manzanar around 125 and at Tule Lake around 75. Tule Lake being a remote site had help from the local Indivisible groups. The Manzanar Committee was represented by Chair Bruce Embrey at Manzanar NHS, and Glen Kitayama in Little Tokyo. Overall, we received a lot of media attention, including Rachel Maddow from MSNOW, David Ono from ABC, and various local news outlets. The Japanese American Community responded to a situation where everyone felt helpless and instead gave people a sense of hope and a desire to want to do something to help. We have improved internal communication and unity. We have taken steps that built capacity to press on to the next major initiative. The benefits from press coverage continue and our success allows us to engage new communities.

Louis Watanabe is an immigrant rights activist and a member of the Manzanar Committee. His grandfather, Ryozo Kado, built the two stone sentry posts at the entrance and the cemetery monument at Manzanar that were photographed by Ansel Adams.

Jerome Rohwer Committee

by John Nishio

The Jerome Rohwer Committee (JRC) was founded in late 2024 and granted 501(c)(3) status in May, 2025. JRC shares the legacy of those illegally imprisoned at Jerome and Rohwer Concentration Camps in Arkansas. We aim to share the experiences of the heinous violation of civil rights suffered by US Americans of Japanese descent and Japanese in the USA during WWII and to preserve and protect the locations of the Concentration Camps for future generations. The Committee embraces protection of civil rights and efforts to prevent and stop loss of civil liberties by other groups.

JRC organizes an annual **Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage** that honors those imprisoned, initiates healing and communication amongst survivors and descendants, and provides learning opportunities for Pilgrims. Here is what two survivors said about the 2025 Pilgrimage.

"Coming to this pilgrimage has been the most eye-opening, most emotional journey for myself, and I'm sure for my daughter, and for all of us that are here today. When I return to our retirement community, I'm going to tell everybody what happened, and I'm gonna spread the word."

— Survivor

"It was a most enlightening experience. I have told everyone who will listen about my experiences there. I feel even more strongly that our story must be told and not forgotten."

— Survivor

The 2026 Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage will be May 20-23, in Little Rock, AR. As the survivor stated above, "...our story must be told and not forgotten", and this year JRC adopted a theme of *Yuzuru—Pass It On*, that it will continue to follow into the future.

At its peak, Jerome housed 8,497 inmates, while Rohwer held 8,475. 4,200 prisoners at the Santa Anita detention facility were transferred to Rohwer, most of the about 5,000 inmates held at the Fresno Detention Prison were sent to Jerome, and most of the about 4,000 incarcerated in Stockton were transferred to Rohwer. 810 Hawai'i residents were incarcerated at Jerome, the largest inmate population of Hawai'i residents. Jerome closed in June 1944, and Rohwer closed Nov. 30, 1945. The Jerome Concentration Camp was the last to open and the first to close. Little evidence of either camp remains. Rohwer has a cemetery, and Jerome has a lone obelisk constructed in 1992. Both have a smokestack and a water tank.

Closing dinner, 2025 Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage

The camps at Jerome and Rohwer were built in nonproductive, swampy regions of southern AR, that had freezing winters and extreme humidity in the summer. Unlike the western concentration camps, Jerome and Rohwer had to deal with water-borne diseases and swamp-related diseases, including malaria. Jerome was considered to have some of the worst living conditions, which may have contributed to Jerome having the highest per capita of "disloyals" compared to the other camps.

At the 2026 Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage, survivors and descendants will share stories of their experiences. One day will be spent visiting the camps and the Jerome-Rohwer Interpretive Museum in McGehee, AR. Honoring and memorializing the inmates and survivors is a highlight of the day, that will include taiko and a mini-Obon in McGehee. Two days in Little Rock will feature speakers, films, workshops, intergenerational discussions, and social activities. The musical group Grateful Crane will perform at the closing dinner. (Summary program URL is below.)

Pilgrims enjoy learning about the experiences of their ancestors, but not all pilgrims are descendants. Non-descendants learn from others and enjoy the connections as much as the survivors and descendants. Through open discussion and story telling, opportunities for dealing with and healing from the experiences of those imprisoned during WWII in the US, simply because of race, will be offered. Pilgrimages can be life-changing experiences. We hope you will be able to attend.

Registration for the 2026 Pilgrimage closes, April 30, 2026, https://tinyurl.com/JRP-Registration;

website, https://jeromerohwer.org; 2026

Program summary, https://jeromerohwer.org/program-2026-summary

Contact us at info@jeromerohwer.org.

Crystal City Rising – Neighbors Not Enemies

by Victor Uno

On October 10, 2025, survivors, descendants, families and friends of the Crystal City Internment Camp made a Pilgrimage to the historic WWII site where thousands of Japanese, German, and Italians were imprisoned during—and even after—the war.

The largely Hispanic Crystal City community embraced survivors as returning family. With welcoming speeches, a Baile Folklorico performance and stories of their own experiences and history of struggle, the Pilgrimage theme—Neighbors Not Enemies—was underscored.

The semi-annual Pilgrimage opened with a gathering at the camp's former swimming pool. In 1946, two 10-year-old Japanese Peruvian girls tragically drowned. With Buddhist Ministers and a Crystal City Pastor, a Memorial Service was held to remember and honor all the internees who died during their incarceration. The service was followed by lunch at the city's high school, visits to camp markers, a short tour of a new internment camp exhibit at the My Story Museum, and a dinner with Crystal City community and friends in the evening.

Stamping of the Ireicho by Pilgrims and Crystal City community members also took place. Over 125,000 names of

incarcerated Japanese are in the Ireicho. Honoring the names of those interned at Crystal City was a moving experience for community participants and family descendants.

The Crystal City Internment was America's longest operating and last WWII concentration camp. It was operated by the Department of Justice's Immigration and Nationalization Services (INS) from 1942 until its closure in 1948. It was the DOJ's largest and only family unification camp.

After the December 7, 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor, thousands of Japanese, German and Italians—deemed "enemy aliens"—were arrested and imprisoned under the 1798 Alien Enemies Act. They were held in dozens of confinement sites and prisons, separated from families and loved ones, many for up to two years. The Crystal City Internment camp was the only DOJ confinement site where families could reunify.

In addition to U.S. internees held under the AEA, Crystal City also held Japanese, German and Italians who were forcibly taken from 13 Latin American countries, 80 percent of whom were from Peru. Renunciants from the Tule Lake Segregation Center also were imprisoned at Crystal City when that WRA camp closed in 1946.

The next Crystal City Pilgrimage will be held in 2027.
For information: crystalcitypilgrimage.org

Katari History and Update

by Lauren Matsumoto

2026 Katari Cohort representing 9 different university campuses. The author is kneeling 4th from left. Photo: Jason Fujii.

In 2017, Keeping Japanese American Stories Alive was dreamed up by the late Gann Matsuda and former Manzanar park ranger Rose Masters. It became a reality in 2018, seeing the need for place-based learning as many become distant from this part of American history. While the program is now known as Katari, the original name remains the core mission. And the way stories are kept alive is by equipping the next generation with the language and personal narratives they can share with others and hopefully the confidence in being a storyteller. This program is only made possible through the collaboration between the Manzanar Committee and the National Park Service. In addition, the program is enriched by the continued support of our survivors willing to share their story, community leaders endowing their institutional knowledge, and the volunteer organizers dedicating their time.

All things start off small yet mighty; the inaugural cohort consisted only of five students from UC San Diego and UC Los Angeles. However, since its inception, Katari has left an immense impact on its students and has seen the return of at least five former participants becoming organizers for this program, including one from the inaugural cohort. These former students, now young professionals, saw the vision Gann had and would like to see the program continue to live on.

As we watch with growing concern the erasure of history, we have seen heightened interest and passion from current students rising to the occasion with a hunger to learn. With this, we have seen the exponential growth in the number of students we welcome over the years. This year, the 2026 cohort consisted of 24 students from 9 different student organizations across California: Cal Poly Pomona, CSU Fullerton, CSU Long Beach, UC Los Angeles, UC Riverside, UC San Diego, UC Berkeley, Stanford, and Japanese American Youth Alliance (JAYA).

In addition to seeing the expansion of the volunteer organizers and the size of the student cohorts, the program has grown from being a two-day intensive weekend trip to become a multi-month commitment. This commitment includes an in-person Little Tokyo (Los Angeles) trip and a virtual session to prepare the students by providing them with foundational context and inspiring them by sharing paths to activism. There is power in immersing oneself in the history and stories of where it took place. During the prime focus of the program, students are taken on a journey to learn from Manzanar and hearing stories from those who were forcibly removed from the land (Pauite and Shoshone People), those unjustifiably incarcerated on this land (former Nikkei incarcerees), and those seeking to protect and preserve our history and this land (descendants of incarcerees and Nikkei activists). Katari also provides the space for students to reflect on how Manzanar's history is relevant to the current attacks on civil and human rights in the United States and notice patterns with the current administration. Upon conclusion of the program, students take with them the tools, knowledge, and stories they have learned to propel them forward with the programs they will organize including Manzanar at Dusk. We hope you will join us in the evening for Manzanar at Dusk to reflect on your time here at pilgrimage, be part of the intergenerational discussion, and recognize the impact Katari had on the students.

Special thank you to our guest speakers who took the time and committed to fostering intergenerational discussions: Noah Williams (Bishop Paiute Tribe member who gave us a history of the land), George Iwamoto (survivor and incarcerated in Manzanar as a child), Pat Sakamoto (survivor born in Manzanar), Hiroshi Shimizu (president of the Tule Lake Committee and born in the concentration camp at Topaz, UT), and Rex Takahashi (author and creator of the powerful language featured on the 1973 California State Landmark plaque).

Lauren Matsumoto works in the U.S.-Japan relations space and is currently the president of Nikkei Rising, a subdivision of the nonprofit Japanese American Memorial Pilgrimages. She is the granddaughter of Tule Lake and Gila River survivors and mixed Nikkei (4th Gen Japanese American and 3rd/4th Gen Chinese American). She was also part of the first Katari cohort and is currently one of the organizers for the group.

DÉJÀ VU: Nikkei in World War II & Today*

by Donald Teruo Hata

Today, at age nearly 87, I base this prose poem, from my childhood memories, vs what is happening in America today. In World War II, U.S. President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, issued Executive Order 9066. EO-9066 led to the mass imprisonment of 120,000 Nikkei, "persons of Japanese ancestry." The majority were U.S. citizens by birthright. I was…I am, one of them.

In World War II, I was a U.S. citizen, but the U.S. government created a clever euphemism: "non-alien." The designation "Non-alien" hiddened me as a U.S. citizen. Then, like today, birthright or naturalized citizenship means nothing, to the current racist president and his racist senior enablers.

In World War II, we were manipulated by racist officials. Like then, and now, we were disposable. The current president's regime celebrates barbaric mass incarcerations and mass deportations. His senior staff boast of building new concentration camps. Like then, and now, the concentration camps are being constructed by private contractors. Follow the money. Racism, greed, and corruption, go hand in hand.

Today, the president's senior staff, openly…blatantly… despise, a diverse society. They reject equal rights of immigrants, women, and Americans of color. In his first regime, and today, he illegally deploys soldiers as a defacto national police. Federal agents wear masks, hides their names, ignore basic rights of aliens and non-White U.S. citizens.

In World War II, Nikkei were political prisoners—without due process, fraudulently imprisoned in so-called "relocation centers," but they were really concentration camps.

I remember those barbed-wire fences in the
United States of America.

The barbed-wire fences were military grade—razor sharp. Tall guard towers, flood lights, machine guns, soldiers with long guns and bayonets, were everywhere. We had no names, only numbers on I.D. tags …hand-written tags, tied around our necks, liked slaves. My family number was 40451. I was a 3-year-old. My personal number was 2013.

I remember those barbed-wire fences in the
United States of America.

Today, the president's senior staff cruelly separate small children from their parents, without efforts to record where they were sent.

In World War II, as in today, there was no privacy. We slept in tarpaper barracks. Communal latrines and shower rooms were denied partitions, especially women. It was part of the plan. Break their spirit… Humiliate all the women—
little girls, mothers, grandmas…

I remember those barbed-wire fences in the
United States of America

Some were indignant. Others were outraged. But, there were informers among us. The informers called themselves "patriots." But those so-called "patriots" lied, fabricated gossip, spied on neighbors, and sucked up to the guards. We called the informers "inu" the Japanese word for "dog." We also called them "nezumi," the Japanese word for "rats."

I remember those barbed-wire fences in the
United States of America.

Increasing protests forced thousands of prisoners to the special "National Segregation concentration camp" at Tule Lake. At Tule Lake, torture and violence got so bad, that even the FBI had to intervene

Still, more than 25,000 Nikkei men (and hundreds of Nikkei women), fought and died for the U.S. Army in World War II. The racially segregated units—the 100th Battalion and the 442nd Regiment—suffered 10,000 casualties, over 300 percent of their original units.

I remember those barbed-wire fences in the
United States of America.

When ordinary men and women do nothing, participatory democracy dies, and evil triumphs. The current president is a demonstrated defacto dictator. He is a twice-convicted felon… a rapist and sexist, close friend of pedophiles. He is a boorish corrupt bully at home and abroad. Close foreign allies and friends no longer trust nor respect our role in the world.

We remember those barbed-wire fences in the
United States of America.

We do not seek vengeance. But we Americans now demand a restoration of our participatory democracy.

DÉJÀ VU.

***NOTES.** *NIKKEI GULAG. Japanese Americans (Nikkei) Political Prisoners and U.S. Concentration Camps in World War II. WATERCOLORS & POEM* (2025). Several anonymous versions of the prose poem, "That Damned Fence," were secretly distributed during World War II, among Nikkei in U.S. concentration camps. The wartime poems were tame, due to reprisals, so I created my version. See Google online for "That Damned Fence;" and Franke Abe and Floyd Cheung (eds), "Authorship uncertain, 'That Damned Fence,'" in *The Literature of Japanese American Incarceration* (2024, p. 103).

Donald Teruo Hata, PhD, was born 1939. He is Emeritus History Professor at California State University Dominguez Hills; CSU Trustees Systemwide CSU Outstanding Professor; amateur watercolor artist, and poet. He was Planning Commissioner, and Councilman in City of Gardena. He and his late spouse, Dr Nadine Ishitani Hata (VP Academic Affairs, El Camino College), co-lectured and co-published on Nikkei (Japanese American) history.

Contact: donaldthata@gmail.com and 310-850-6245

Wakasa Memorial Committee

by Nancy Ukai

In 2026, the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, the Manzanar Pilgrimage reminds us how easily liberty and life can be lost in the land of the free.

Historical memory lies buried beneath the soil. At the Topaz concentration camp in Utah, an immigrant man walking his dog on April 11, 1943, was gunned down by a watchtower guard. Gerald Philpott, 19, claimed at his court-martial that the shot to James Hatsuaki Wakasa's chest was "an accident." He was acquitted.

Wakasa's friends erected a one-ton stone memorial inside the fence where he died. Ordered to destroy it, they buried it instead. It remained underground until 2021, when the Topaz Museum Board hired a local backhoe company to excavate it. Japanese Americans were not consulted, and no archaeologists were present—even though archaeologists Jeff Burton and Mary Farrell had located the top of the buried stone using an archival map.

The monument's rediscovery provides fresh evidence of Japanese American resistance to injustice. The disrespectful manner of its excavation spurred the formation of the Wakasa Memorial Committee, an advocacy group working to center survivor and descendant voices in future decisions about the desecrated artifact and site.

The WMC also created a handmade washi replica of the Wakasa stone and is carrying it to the places where eight Japanese immigrants and U.S. citizens were killed by the military in the WWII camps.

That includes Manzanar. During the 1942 Manzanar Uprising, two nisei, James Ito, 17, and James Kanagawa, 21, were shot and killed by military police.

At last year's Manzanar Pilgrimage, a night ceremony was held at their death site with the Wakasa lantern, led by Rev. Duncan Ryuken Williams before 80 pilgrims.

A video by Seattle artist Glenn Mitsui was projected on the Wakasa Spirit Stone lantern. One image showed Ito and Kanagawa facing the Manzanar Ireito. Although it was erected the year after their deaths, it stands in remembrance of them and all who suffered the barbarity wrought by Executive Order 9066.

We remember. We resist the erasure of our history at Manzanar and at all sites of conscience.

Video of 2025 ceremony:
https://wakasaspiritstone.org/visuals

Wakasaspiritstone.org

Wakasamemorial.org

In Memoriam

Frank Chuman, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, Robert A. Nakamura and Mary Nomura were key figures in the history of Manzanar or its remembrance who have passed away in the last few years.

Frank Chuman (1917–2022) was a pioneering Nisei attorney who was also a key figure in the Manzanar uprising of December 1942. Resettling in Ohio and Maryland, he completed his law degree and returned to Los Angeles where he was involved in many key civil rights related cases in the 1950s and 1960s and was legal counsel and national president of the JACL. He also authored a landmark legal history of Japanese Americans, *The Bamboo People*, in 1976. The Asian American Curriculum Project published his memoir, *Manzanar and Beyond*, in 2011. He spent his last years in Thailand and lived to the age of 105. Though he passed away four years ago, his death was not announced until 2025.

Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston (1934–2024) is best known for her camp memoir *Farewell to Manzanar*, co-authored with her husband James D. Houston and first published in 1973. Though it received a mixed reception by the Japanese American community, it has undoubtedly been the most widely read camp memoir and was made into a television movie that aired nationally in 1976. It continues to be regularly assigned in middle and high school classes and has introduced untold numbers of people to the story of Manzanar and the wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans. Wakatsuki Houston later authored a novel partially set in a fictionalized Manzanar, *The Legend of Fire Horse Woman*, that was published in 2003.

Robert A. Nakamura (1936–2025) was a renowned filmmaker and college professor who was incarcerated at Manzanar as a child. After becoming a successful commercial photographer in the 1960s, he was among the young Nisei/older Sansei who became politicized in that decade and turned to art and activism that tackled the legacy of the Japanese American incarceration. His first documentary film, *Manzanar* (1972), was one of the first explorations of the incarceration by a Japanese American filmmaker and he went to make numerous other films on that topic, many associated either with Visual Communications, the Asian Pacific American visual arts organization that he served as the founding director of, or the Japanese American National Museum, where he created, with his wife and producing partner Karen L. Ishizuka, the Frank H. Watase Media Arts Center. As the director of UCLA's Center for EthnoCommunications, he also trained multiple generations of young filmmakers.

Mary Kageyama Nomura (1925–2026) known as the "Songbird of Manzanar," arrived at Manzanar at age 16 and passed away recently at the remarkable age of 100. Her family spans five generations of artists, beginning with her mother, and her creative legacy continues through her great-grandchildren.

During the Depression, her brother saved what he could so she could take singing lessons—an experience she credited as the beginning of her desire to become a singer. At Manzanar, she grew into that role, offering her voice to a community that deeply needed it. She sang for weddings, funerals, and many other events, and collaborated closely with Louis Frizzell, the high school teacher who nurtured music and theater at the camp. Manzanar is also where she met her husband, Shi Nomura, and together they built a life and family after the war. Mary continued to share her voice generously with the annual Pilgrimage, community gatherings, and the Grateful Crane Ensemble.

Repression and Resistance, Redux

by Barbara Takei

The Tule Lake concentration camp was the crucible for the government's most extreme policies against Japanese Americans during WWII. Those angered by America's injustice wound up segregated at Tule Lake, which was turned into a maximum-security prison to punish those who spoke out.

The instrument of criminalization was the infamously ill-conceived and ineptly-administered loyalty questionnaire. The key question was ambiguously worded, and assumed loyalty to the Emperor of Japan. A "wrong" answer or a refusal to answer was was viewed as evidence of disloyalty. Qualifying an acceptable response, as in "if my family is freed," was treated as proof of future treachery.

In protest, over 15,000 Japanese Americans refused to cooperate, giving "wrong" answers or refusing to answer the government's loyalty questionnaire. Many planned to self-deport rather than endure America's racist abuse. Their choices led to segregation at Tule Lake. Among the protesters were 2,165 dissidents from Manzanar who were exiled to the Tule Lake Segregation Center.

At the Segregation Center, prisoners were demonized and victimized by harsher policies than inmates at the other nine concentration camps. Leave clearance was ended. An armed 1,000 man battalion occupied the Segregation Center and imposed martial law, invading inmate barracks and confiscating contraband and valuables. Two stockades and a jail were built to punish those deemed "troublemakers." Japanese American protesters were stripped of birthright citizenship, separated from their families and headed toward deportation as "enemy aliens."

As the world watched masked and armed ICE agents occupying the streets of Los Angeles, Chicago, Portland and Minneapolis, creating and escalating conflict, we witnessed the pattern of government repression and resistance that played out in Tule Lake during segregation. Then as now, government provocation, inmate anger and resistance, and escalating punishment promoted and justified more repression.

These nearly unknown events involving resistance to government repression within the Segregation Center made Tule Lake the most significant civil rights site of the WWII Japanese American incarceration. Yet for most of the past

80 years, the JACL condemned the civil rights struggle of the no-nos and the renunciants as acts of "disloyalty." Those who responded to the illegal and unjust incarceration with moral and political courage— who resisted the government's injustice—were ignored and erased by the JACL, that promoted a wartime narrative that viewed protest as shameful.

During a time of self-reflection following the redress movement's success, in 1990 the JACL commissioned an internal study, the Lim Report, that examined the organization's wartime policies, especially the long-rumored claims of the JACL's complicity and collaboration with the government's removal and incarceration program.

For the past 36 years the JACL withheld the Lim Report, although copies circulated among critics of the organization who shunned the JACL as "inu" who betrayed the community during WWII. Thus, it was an unexpected surprise this March 30, 2026, when the JACL released the Lim Report along with a statement that marked the closure of Tule Lake, the last of the concentration camps, and the need to repair the toxic fracture promoted by the organization's embrace of the loyal/disloyal paradigm.

The JACL's statement begins an act of repair. One of the most perfidious acts of the JACL was the perpetuation of government propaganda concerning the Tule Lake Segregation Center, that erased the stories of protest within the Japanese American narrative by defining dissent as disloyal troublemaking. The erasure left Sansei and Yonsei

generations with a false narrative—that resistance—that acts of moral and political courage were the work of traitors and terrorists. Those who courageously stood up and spoke truth to power were demonized as "disloyal" and "pro-Japan fanatics." The voices of protesters were shamed and silenced, and their stories were erased from the Japanese American narrative. What remained was the lie that our forebears did not stand up for justice and speak out.

Now, as our community faces a moral imperative to speak out against similar injustices, the JACL must reckon with a narrative that marginalized the very resistance our community must claim. To honor only military service and accommodation diminishes the integrity of ancestors who took enormous risks to champion civil and human rights.

Tule Lake's dissidents built a powerful civil rights legacy. Now more than ever, we must honor their resistance and hold in esteem our ancestors who had the courage to speak truth to power.

The Tule Lake Committee continues fighting to stop the FAA's plan to build a massive 3-mile long, 10-foot high security fence that would desecrate the historic Tule Lake concentration camp site.

In early August, the FAA will open a public comment period, soliciting input on their long-sought security fence that the Tule Lake Committee has fought more than 20 years. This is an opportunity for our community to tell the FAA and members of Congress that Japanese Americans want to preserve this most important civil rights site, and want to stop the FAA from desecrating it.

Stay tuned and get ready to write to the Federal government to tell them that Japanese Americans want the Federal government to stop erasing the history of immigrants and POC!

Remembering Professor Art Hansen

October 10, 1938 - October 30, 2025

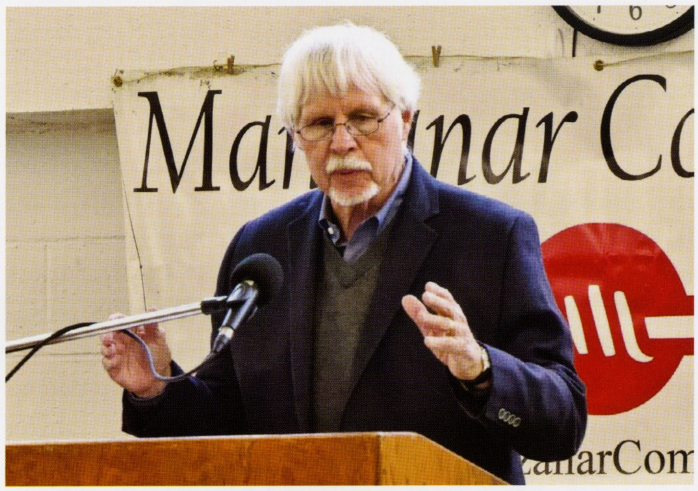


Photo by Gann Matsuda/Manzanar Committee

Professor Art Hansen is best known for his pioneering work in developing the new field of oral history as the founding director of the Japanese American Project of the CSUF Oral History Program. As part of the project, Professor Hansen collaborated with fellow historian Betty Mitson and Sue Kunitomi Embrey of the Manzanar Committee to interview Harry Ueno, a key figure in the Manzanar Uprising (a/k/a "Manzanar Riot"). This oral history became the core of their books *Manzanar Martyr: An Interview with Harry Y. Ueno* and *Voices Long Silent: An Oral History Inquiry into the Japanese American Evacuation.*

Professor Hansen reflected on his work: "My work has embraced the full extent of Japanese American history, society, and culture, [but] the lion's share has riveted upon the protest, dissent, and resistance of Japanese American individuals and groups in relation to the history and legacy of the World War II Japanese American experience."

Bruce Embrey, Chair of the Manzanar Committee, has known Professor Hansen for most of his life: "Art was a significant force in the life of the Manzanar Committee for the better part of 50 years. He was a consistent ally, friend, and colleague of my mother's from the early 1970s, offering advice and support at every turn. Art's steadfast and dogged determination to capture the stories of the "unquiet Nisei"—the resisters and principled individuals who fought back during and after camp—placed him squarely on the side of those who broke with the mainstream, sanitized version of the forced removal. Art wasn't an armchair critic or detached observer. He was a passionate and skilled intellectual who contributed so much to our understanding of EO 9066 and its impact on our community."

Manzanar Site Updates

by Manzanar Rangers

Manzanar National Historic Site was established by Congress on March 3, 1992, after decades of grassroots efforts led by Sue Kunitomi Embrey and the Manzanar Committee. The NPS preserves 814 of the original 5,415 acres that comprised the historic Manzanar War Relocation Center. Today's site boundaries include the footprint where 36 blocks were hastily constructed and families were forced to live within one-square mile of barbed wire. Also within the barbed wire fence was the Children's Village orphanage where visitors can consider the impacts of the incarceration on children without parents to shield them. Merritt Park and other Japanese gardens highlight the resilience, resistance, and beauty displayed by Japanese Americans incarcerated at Manzanar. Outside the fence but preserved by the NPS today, includes the cemetery and the original monument created by and for the people of Manzanar in August 1943. Historic photos, artwork, archives, and hundreds of oral history interviews preserved at Manzanar help bring the human experience to visitors in the hope that they will make real connections between their lives and the lives of Japanese Americans incarcerated during WWII.

Here are a few updates from the past year:

- Manzanar's award-winning volunteer-based Community Archeology Program continued to be the lifeblood of the site by repairing, maintaining, and uncovering our historic fabric. We could not do it without their volunteer efforts. This year's excavation and restoration efforts are focused on the Block 6 Mess Hall Garden.
- A grant from the *Fund for People in the Parks* restored Manzanar's primary baseball field, located north of the visitor center along the auto tour road. Many of our staff worked with volunteer Dan Kwong on the baseball field project.
- In February 2026, rangers and the Manzanar Committee hosted a weekend Katari site visit for the college students who host the Manzanar at Dusk portion of the pilgrimage.
- Site staff continued to strengthen our irrigation system for the restored gardens, gathered oral history interviews with survivors, and maintained our commitment to preserve this special place.

Partnerships

Manzanar NHS thanks the following partners for their continued support:

- Since October 2018, *Sierra Forever* (formerly ESIA) has managed and staffed the non-profit Manzanar bookstore, keeping shelves stocked with educational materials and commemorative gifts.
- The *Fund for People in Parks* supported Manzanar through a grant to fund the restoration of the beloved baseball field.

Manzanar on Social Media

Website: www.nps.gov/manz

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ManzanarNationalHistoricSite

Instagram: www.instagram.com/manzanarnps

YouTube: ManzanarNPS - YouTube

Other NPS Japanese American Confinement Sites:

Amache National Historic Site, Colorado: www.nps.gov/amch

Honouliuli National Historic Site, Hawaii: www.nps.gov/hono

Minidoka National Historic Site, Idaho: www.nps.gov/miin

Tule Lake National Monument, California: www.nps.gov/tule

Manzanar by the Numbers

Annual Visitation:	93,854 visitors in 2025
Size:	814 acres
Volunteers:	154 people donated 4,605 hours in FY25

~ Banner Carriers 2026 ~

AMACHE, COLORADO – Melany Lucia

I proudly carry this banner in memory of many Japanese Americans. I feel the pain and the pride of my ancestors. We stand tall and proud. I am Japanese American.

CRYSTAL CITY, TEXAS – Brian Niiya

I carry this banner in memory of my mother and her family, and all of the other families detained at Crystal City, the INS's World War II "family internment camp," and in recognition of families interned in similar camps today.

GILA RIVER, ARIZONA – Carrie Morita

The Gila River War Relocation Center opened July 20, 1942 on Native American land and held 13,348 people. I carry this banner to honor my family and all who suffered through this terrible time.

HEART MOUNTAIN, WYOMING – David Fujioka & Kiyo Fukumoto (former incarceree)

I carry the banner to honor my Uncle Ted Fujioka. He paid the ultimate sacrifice so that his family and future generations could live in a "better America."

JEROME, ARKANSAS – Colleen Miyano

Jerome, Arkansas, was the smallest and last camp to open of the ten WWII US concentration camps. More than 8,000 Japanese Americans from California and Hawaii were placed in overcrowded housing in Denson, in the Mississippi River delta region, 120 miles Southeast of Little Rock, Arkansas, in heavily wooded swampland, 27 miles south of Rohwer. The camp finally closed on June 30, 1944.

MANZANAR, CALIFORNIA – Pat Sakamoto

I carry this banner to honor my mother Koo Sakamoto who gave birth to me and my sister in camp. She was unable to speak openly about her incarceration in the camps because it was too painful for her. In her own words "There is nothing to remember. It was a bad time."

MINIDOKA, IDAHO – Linden Takuma Nishinaga

As a Camp Minidoka survivor, I proudly and respectfully carry the banner for the now Minidoka National Historic Site. I do this to honor the 13,000 people unjustly incarcerated there, mostly for whom were from the U.S. Pacific Northwest. They included members of my Nishinaga family, the Fujita's, the Hashimoto's, the Tanaka's, and so many other families and individuals.

POSTON, ARIZONA – Megan Matsumoto

I raise this banner in honor of Mary Higuchi, former incarceree. She said, "I feel the weight and burden of my family and others who were incarcerated at Poston. Be strong!"

ROHWER, ARKANSAS – Justin Fujii

The Rohwer War Relocation Center was in operation from September 18, 1942–November 30, 1945 and held up to 8,475 incarcerees. I am representing this camp as well as all the others who unjustly held people of Japanese ancestry during WW II.

TOPAZ, UTAH – Hans Goto

I carry the banner to honor my parents and family and to honor and remember all who were unjustly incarcerated in the camps. I am particularly grateful to my parents, James M. Goto and Masako Kusayanagi Miura who were physicians at both Manzanar and at Topaz. They were forced to move from Manzanar to Topaz after an uprising by some of the residents since they disagreed with the military's findings.

Everyone in the camps should honored and revered for their bravery and strength in such a prejudicial and unjust time. I bow my head in gratitude.

TULE LAKE, CALIFORNIA – Louis Watanabe

Dad's family went to Tule Lake via the Pinedale Assembly Center. Recalling how hot the Central Valley was during the summer compared to their Washington farm in the Renton Junction. My dad Eay Watanabe spent a stint in the stockade. He spent his late teens at Tule Lake.

TUNA CANYON, CALIFORNIA – Kay & Kyoko Oda and Kerry Cababa

We congratulate the Manzanar Committee for its long commitment to resistance and solidarity. The Tuna Canyon Detention Station Coalition thanks you for your support. Our exhibit is touring the UK led by Conrad Caspari, descendant.

442 RCT, 100th BN, MIS – Keith Kawamoto

I am honored to be asked to represent the 442nd RCT. Although originally denied the right to serve because they were considered "enemy aliens" they distinguished themselves by becoming the most decorated unit in the history of the United States military, for their size & length of service. They fought, died & killed while their families languished in concentration camps, incarcerated by their own country!

NPCA stands with the Manzanar Committee to ensure that our national parks and the people, places and stories they hold are not censored or erased.

Congratulations and thank you for 57 years of vigilance, stewardship, and solidarity.

NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

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Acknowledgments

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Special Thanks to:

David Fujioka, *Program Design*

Sound Technicians: Glenn Suravech, Taiji Miyagawa, Damon Kunitomi

Arnold Maeda Manzanar Pilgrimage Grant Recipients

Dan Bui Kubota and Dianne Chevez Hernandez

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Isaac Vaughan, *Administrative Officer*
Naomi Thompson, *Administrative Assistant*

Cultural Resources

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Ed Standefer, *Interpretation Manager*
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Sarah Bone, *Park Ranger*

Maintenance

Jon Harris, *Facility Manager*
Daron Hayes
Gil Larimore
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Website

www.nps.gov/manz
Tel. 760-878-2194

Sierra Forever (formerly ESIA)

Jeff Gabriel, *Executive Director*
Beth Jeffery, *Bookstore Manager*
Abby McAlister, *Sales Associate*
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Bella Umeki-Martinez
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Kristi Ando
Kiana Hume
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Tim Takeda
Kyra Victor

The Manzanar Committee, which has sponsored the Pilgrimage for 57 years, is an all-volunteer organization, incorporated under the laws of the State of California as a 501(c)3 non-profit educational organization. Your generous gift will help us continue to work toward public education awareness.

If you'd like to help continue the legacy, please visit our website at: www.manzanarcommittee.org and donate to the Manzanar Committee.

Thank you.

THE MANZANAR COMMITTEE

MISSION STATEMENT: *The Manzanar Committee is dedicated to educating and raising public awareness about the incarceration and violation of civil rights of persons of Japanese ancestry during WWII, and to the continuing struggle of all peoples when Constitutional rights are in danger.*

The Manzanar Committee, a 501©3 non-profit organization, can be reached at:
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Support Manzanar Committee's Katari Program

Today, as we hold our 57th annual Manzanar Pilgrimage, we're asking you to support our Katari program.

Katari, which means "to tell stories" in Japanese, is an intensive, educational program for college students culminating in a weekend of place-based learning at Manzanar National Historic Site. College students from Nikkei Student Unions across California learn about the history of the unjust incarceration of Japanese Americans, focusing on the years of activism leading to redress and reparations and the protection and preservation of Manzanar National Historic Site.

Katari Program at Manzanar National Historic Site

The program examines the role Manzanar's history plays in standing up to threats against democracy and attacks on civil and human rights in the United States. Students leave Katari with the tools to teach others these invaluable lessons and carry the stories forward for future generations.

Your support will help ensure the critical stories of those who were unjustly incarcerated in America's concentration camps will live on. Make a donation to support this program and ensure the education of the next generation. Please send a check to the Manzanar Committee or give online.

In the words of our students:

"The Katari trip made me realize how little I knew, and it reaffirmed how important it is to educate ourselves and others about this history."

"I came away from the weekend with a new level of understanding and empathy for what happened. I believe that anyone can benefit from going to Manzanar, regardless of their race or ethnicity."

"To actually hear the stories straight from the ones who experienced them was truly an experience I will hold in my heart forever. There are no words to describe how grateful I am to those who were so open and willing to share this part of their lives… To say 'this trip changed my life' would be an understatement. But it is the clearest way I can verbalize what my experience was."

"Katari is about community, compassion and legacy, in the context of the past, present, and future."

"Just for giving me the ability to learn more about my grandparents' story I will always be extremely grateful for Katari."

"This weekend was one of the most rewarding, educational, and impactful times of my entire life… As we drove away from Manzanar under the colored sky and saw those mountains that towered over the camp disappear over the horizon, I realized that our lives are a product of our ancestors and we have a duty to them to keep their stories alive so that something like this will never, ever happen again."

Thank you for supporting our Katari program with your donation today.

The Dow Villa Motel congratulates the
Manzanar Committee on their
57th Annual Manzanar Pilgrimage.

Dow Villa Motel

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More than just a game: A reminder that we must learn from history!

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Through their resilience, love, and perseverance, we have our lives today.

Thank you, Jack and Masa Kunitomi, Sue Embrey, and Midori Iwata.

Okage sama de

Masa Fujioka (catcher) 1921-1985

Yoshisuke Jack Kunitomi 1915-2018

Sue Kunitomi 1923-2006 and
Midori Kunitomi 1925-2001

Recollections of a Girl in Manzanar *by Joyce Nakamura Okazaki*

Talk given on March 11, 2026 at Wintersburg Senior Fellowship

On Dec. 7, 1941, my grandfather was arrested on his doorstep by waiting FBI, as the family returned home from a dinner at a restaurant in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles. He was taken to Federal Prison in San Pedro and later moved to Missoula, Montana.

We were not sent to camp, but we signed up to go to camp. My Aunt was a doctor and she was married to a doctor/surgeon. They were asked by the Calif. Dept of Health to open a hospital in Manzanar. She told them that she would agree to do that if all of her relatives and all of his relatives could go to Manzanar. My grandmother and all the aunts and uncle by marriage left for Manzanar on Apr 1. We left the next day, boarding the train at a railroad siding near Union Station. This was April 2, 1942 and I was 7 years old. After a long, slow journey on the train with the shades pulled down so we couldn't see out the windows, we stopped at a RR station and got off the train. After we got our luggage, we boarded a US Army transport truck with benches in the rear. They took us to the Manzanar Assembly Center, the first detention center that was built to house the Japanese that had to move from their homes. It was opened on March 25, 1942. Barracks were still being built.

Photo by Ansel Adams

My uncle met us at the entrance with a flashlight.. After we picked up our luggage, he led us to the barrack where we were to stay. We joined my grandmother and two single aunts, because there was a shortage of barracks. The room was bare with many cots and mattresses filled with straw. There was no running water and no place to cook food. We had to walk to the women's lavatory to use the facilities. There was a row of toilets with no walls or doors, no privacy. The row of wash basins were on the other side of the wall. The showers were in another room with just the heads and no walls. No Privacy.

Grandmother and aunts moved to another barrack about a month later, but we stayed in this room, 20 by 25 feet, with one hanging light bulb, and a oil heater for warming the room. No chair to sit on or table. We were in Blk 12, barrack 9-Unit 4. We had to walk to the Mess Hall to eat. The food in the Mess Hall was not very delicious. I mostly didn't like the food and would sometimes refuse to eat. My mother would make me sit at the table until I took one bite, but I would not take a bite and sit there until it was time for the mess hall to close.

June of 1942, Manzanar became a regular WRA camp and my grandfather was released to join us in camp. All of our relatives lived close by in Block 12, different barracks. Grandparents were in Block 29, also my doctor aunt and her husband. It was close to the hospital.

I was in 2nd grade at Maryknoll Missionary School in Little Tokyo. All of the students were Japanese, and after it was determined that all Japanese would be moving, the school was closed in March.. When I arrived in Manzanar there was no school. School did not start until the fall, after the Superintendent was hired to organize the school. I told my mother I was not going back to second grade, but I want to go to 3rd grade, so she let me, as I was 8 years old. My birthday is in July.

Third grade was a wonderful year. All the Elementary school children put on a pageant with all of us learning and singing patriotic songs of America and folk songs of Steven Foster. We learned to sing a lot of songs. Some of us even learned to do folk dances. At the end of the school year we were all tested. The results of the test ere explained to my parents and me. If I went to summer school for 4th grade, I could go on to 5th grade in September. I said I wanted to do this. My third grade teacher, Mrs. Sandridg was a wonderful teacher. I had learned a lot from her.

My parents were college graduates and they had jobs in camp. My mother graduated from USC was a high school PE and Health teacher for grades 7 to 12, boys and girls. My father graduated from UC Berkeley as an Architect, so he was hired as draftsman and surveyor for the Public Works Dept. They were each paid $19 a month, as were doctors, dentists and teachers wiih college degrees. They could not be paid more than a regular US Army soldier was paid, which was $21 a month.

Then there were the rabbits. My other grandfather raised rabbits, cagefuls of them. He decided to donate the rabbits to Block 12 Mess Hall for Christmas dinner. The day arrived for an event and people were walking past our barrack so I decided to join them. There were two huge steel cages with rabbits running around and men working inside them to catch a rabbit, one at a time, drown them in a barrel full of water, cut the head off, remove the skin, and hand the body to drain above a basin. I watched until the last rabbit was worked on. When dinner came on Christmas Day, I took one look at the food and could not eat one bite. I will not eat rabbit to this day, no matter how fancy or deliciously it is prepared.

The most significant event for me in Manzanar was to be photographed by Ansel Adam, the famous landscape photographer. He was too old for the draft and wanted to do something to be of service, so he asked his friend, Ralph Merritt, director of Manzanar, if there was something he could do. Mr. Merritt suggested he take photographs of people in the camp, living their everyday lives. He was not to take a photo of the barbed wire fences or the guard towers. Our family was selected to be photographed, and he took our portraits with the black tarpaper barrack as background. He also took photos of us doing different things. (A picture of the three of us is one of my favorite photos.) Ansel Adams wrote the text and took all of the photos for the book, *Born Free and Equal*, published by U.S. Camera in 1944. It had a soft cover. Our portraits are in the book, captioned with our names. The book was reprinted in 2001 with a hard cover, quality paper for the photographs, and a colorful book jacket. My photo was selected to be on the cover. The reprint was in anticipation of the opening of the Manzanar National Historic Site.

My father was not photographed because he was away, picking potatoes in Pocatello Idaho. He had planned to leave camp and go East to look for work. He applied for permission to leave as did my mother. He was approved to leave, but she wasn't. She was told that her father was in Federal Prison. She was finally given permission to leave after additional questioning. My father got a one-way ticket to New York City and $25, found a job that would take him to Chicago. This was Spring, 1944. When school year ended, we packed and left Manzanar in July of 1944 by bus to Reno, then boarding Union Pacific train to Chicago. We were not allowed to return to the West Coast because it was still the Military Exclusion Zone. The end

Joyce, Yaeko Nakamura (mother), Louise (sister).
Photo by Ansel Adams

CORRECTION: REPRINT OF PAGE IN 2025 BOOKLET WITH CORRECT WORD IN BOLD TYPE

Conversations with Dr. Goto and his Daughter and his Son

My father spoke to Frank Chuman, Hospital Administrator, right after the interrogation by the Military and told him what he said to them, that all of the men were shot in the **BACK** or the side. One was instant, another had complications and died on the operating table, nine others were wounded by military gunfire. They were all fleeing and tried to escape being hit. My father refused to sign a false document and was ordered to "get out." He and my mother, who was 7 months pregnant with me, left for Topaz, Utah. My father was a consummate professional and would become upset if the staff did not have the patient's welfare in mind. For him, the patient came first.(

— Denise M. Goto Kodani, Pharm.D

I am proud of my dad for standing up to the Military and refusing to sign a false autopsy report. He was an experienced surgeon and performed surgeries to repair the wounds on nine men. He was also a trained coroner and performed the autopsies on the two deceased men. The Administration wanted him to state that the bullets entered from the front for all these men, indicating that they were attacking the soldiers.He refused to lie, and was adamant that all were shot from the back or side. He was relieved of his job as Chief Medical Director and told he must leave Manzanar. He was sent to Topaz and stayed there until the end of the war, being paid only $19 a month for his extraordinary skills as a medical doctor.

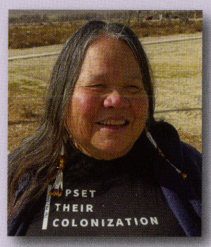
— Hans Goto

The two deceased men were Jimmy Ito, age 17, and James Kanagawa, who were killed by the Military Police on December 6, 1942. Their autopsies were performed by Dr. James Goto, Chief Medical Officer and Coroner, who examined and took note of the entry wounds, and testified during an inquest that the bullets entered the bodies from the side or the back, and not the front as he was ordered to do. This showed that boys were sunning away or turning around to run away from the shooters. He refused to sign their false statement autopsy and the next day was relieved of his duties as Chief Medical Officer and was ordered to leave Manzanar. (Quoted from the book, ***Manzanar and Beyond***, written by Frank Chuman, but the deceased were not named in this book.)

Dr. James Goto examining patient.

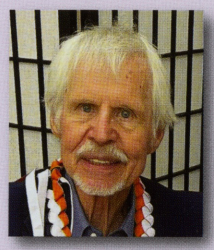
Remembering Kathy Jefferson Bancroft and Dr. Arthur Hansen

We honor the legacies of Kathy and Art who each made tremendous contributions to Manzanar over decades.



Kathy Jefferson Bancroft (1954-2026) was born and raised in Lone Pine, in the traditional and unceded homeland of her ancestors, the Nüümü (Paiute) and Newe (Shoshone). She served as the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone Reservation.

Kathy's passion for preserving natural and cultural resources ran the length of Payahuunadü (Owens Valley) and far beyond. She fought for water rights, restoration of Patsiata (Owens Lake), and for preserving the valley. She led Tribal opposition to a large solar farm east of Manzanar, and to mining east of Lone Pine. Kathy was just as passionate about educating people about places and stories. She created a program for Tribal Youth to interview their elders. She advised the National Park Service staff on numerous projects and programs.



Dr. Arthur Hansen (1938-2025) spent more than 50 years leading efforts to research, preserve, and share Japanese American history. He was a professor at California State University Fullerton and founder of the Japanese American Oral History Project and the Center for Oral and Public History. He later served as Historian for the Japanese American National Museum.

In addition to his own research and writing, Art taught and collaborated with generations of historians, authors, and academics. He served as a key advisor in creating exhibits, media, publications, as well as Manzanar's Oral History Program. He was more than a mentor.

Both Kathy and Art were friends of Manzanar, personally and professionally. We honor their contributions and memories. Their passion inspired us and their legacies will touch future generations.

BERNADETTE JOHNSON, *Superintendent (2014-2021)*
ALISA LYNCH, *Team Lead for Interpretation & Visitor Services (2001-2023)*

CULTURAL NEWS

Community Website for Nikkei in Southern California

www.culturalnews.com

Building Digital Archive of Tradition, Culture, and Wartime Experiences

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Los Angeles, CA 90020
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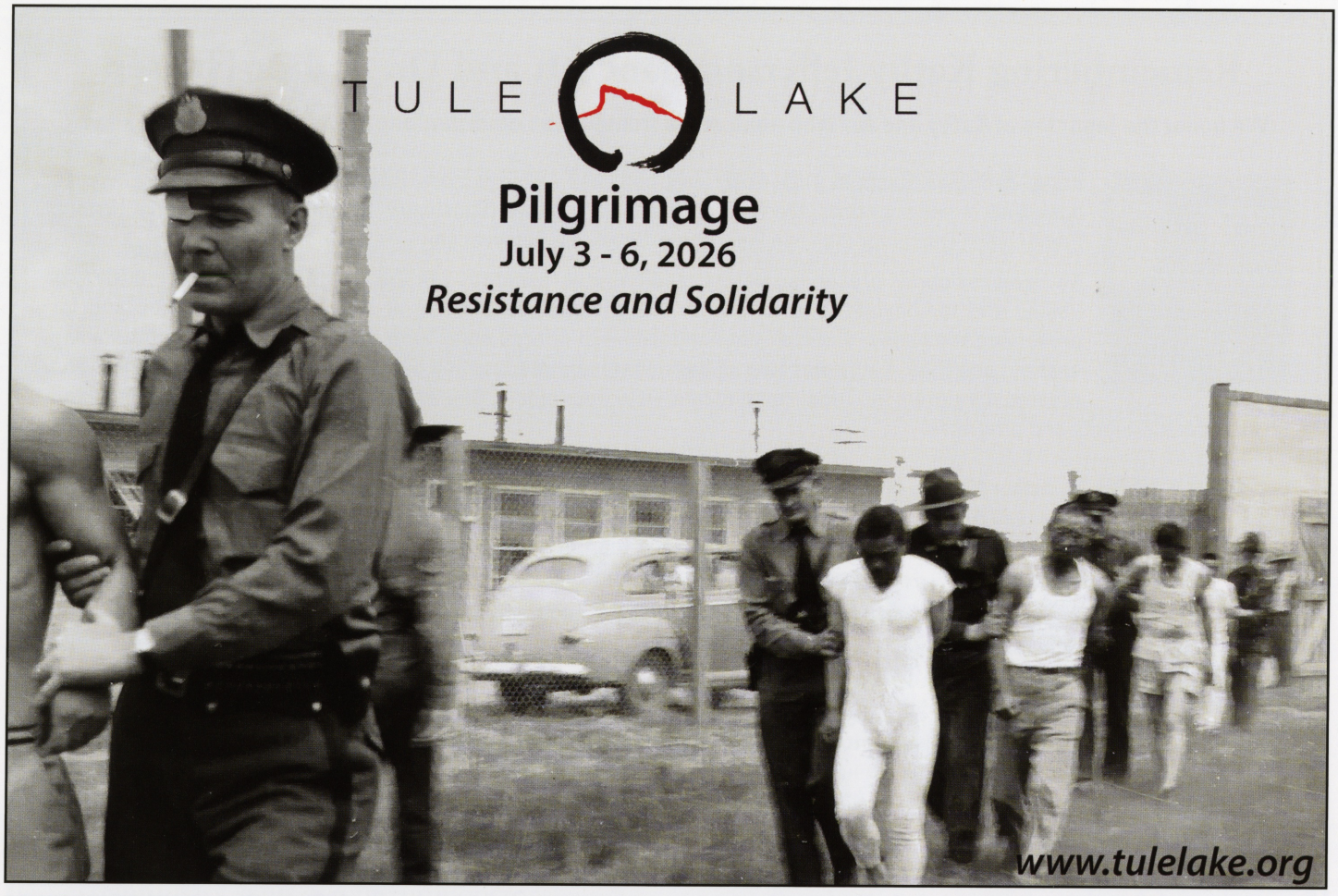
A note of Gratitude!

We are incredibly grateful for your leadership as chair of the Christian Liturgy for the Interfaith Service for nearly 17 years following the retirement of Rev. Paul Nakamura.

Together with other faiths, you have brought peace, hope and healing to our communities.

Best wishes in your future endeavors.

Reverend Dr. Dickson Kazuo Yagi



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Congratulations and Honoring the 57th Year of the Manzanar Pilgrimage

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America's Last WWII Concentration Camp

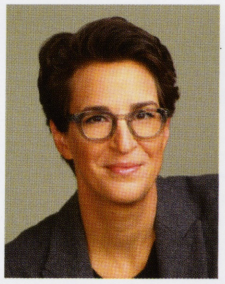
NCRR honors:

Art Hansen
for his immeasurable contributions to scholarship about the Japanese American incarceration and resistance.

Kathy Jefferson Bancroft
for her tireless advocacy for Indigenous rights and allyship with the Japanese American community.

NCRR
Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress

Thank you
Rachel Maddow
for six Podcasts
of ***Burn Order.***



Listen on Apple Podcast

Congratulations Manzanar Committee on your 57th Pilgrimage!

From your friends at the
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Please visit our website for past GVJCI Day of Remembrance programs.
jci-gardena.org

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Thanks the Manzanar Committee for Keeping this History Alive.

JBA 南カリフォルニア日系企業協会
Japan Business Association of Southern California

Remembering Kathy Jefferson Bancroft & Art Hansen.
Your legacies live on in our fight for justice.

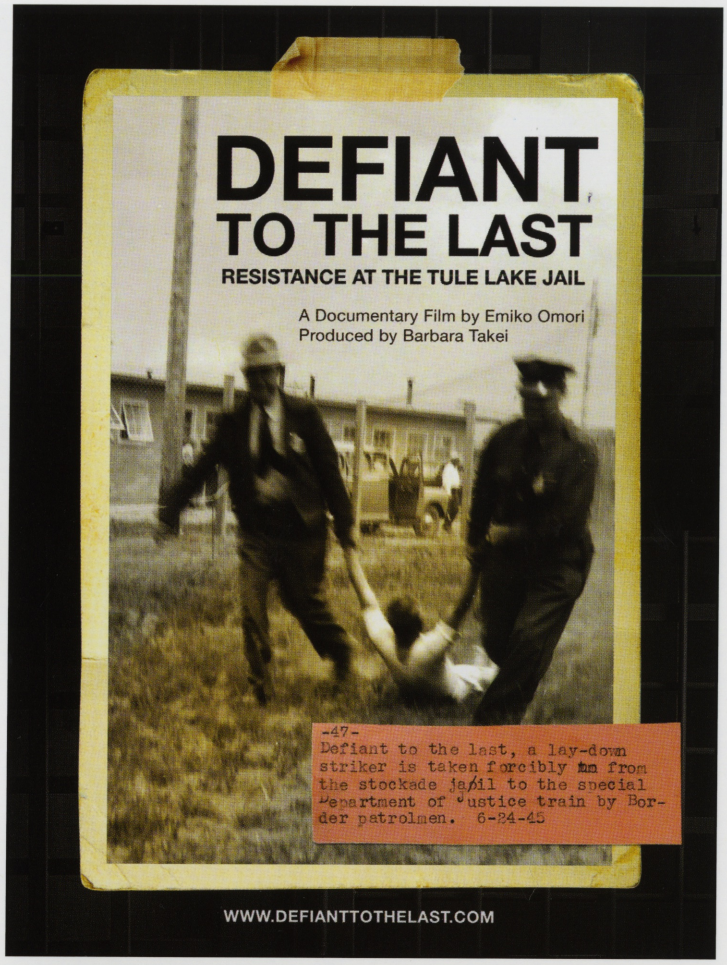
NIKKEI PROGRESSIVES
LITTLE TOKYO

Peace, Justice, and Equality!

We Remember

Image credit, ECM 1994.80 Block 24 Manzanar Artist: T. Itokawa.
Donated by Sachi Ochiai in memory of J.M. Tashima

Eastern California Museum


DEFIANT
TO THE LAST
RESISTANCE AT THE TULE LAKE JAIL
A Documentary Film by Emiko Omori
Produced by Barbara Takei
-47-
Defiant to the last, a lay-down striker is taken forcibly from the stockade jail to the special Department of Justice train by Border patrolmen. 6-24-45
WWW.DEFIANTTOTHELAST.COM

Thank you Manzanar Committee for your leadership & vigilance!

Remembering with gratitude at Manzanar
Mr. Ryozo Kado & the St. Francis Xavier Maryknoll faith community, Bro. Paul Chamberlain, Sr. Bernadette Yoshimochi, Sr. Anna Hayashi, Fr. Clement Boesflug and Fr. Hugh Lavery

Maryknoll Sisters - E.A.R.T.H. Commons
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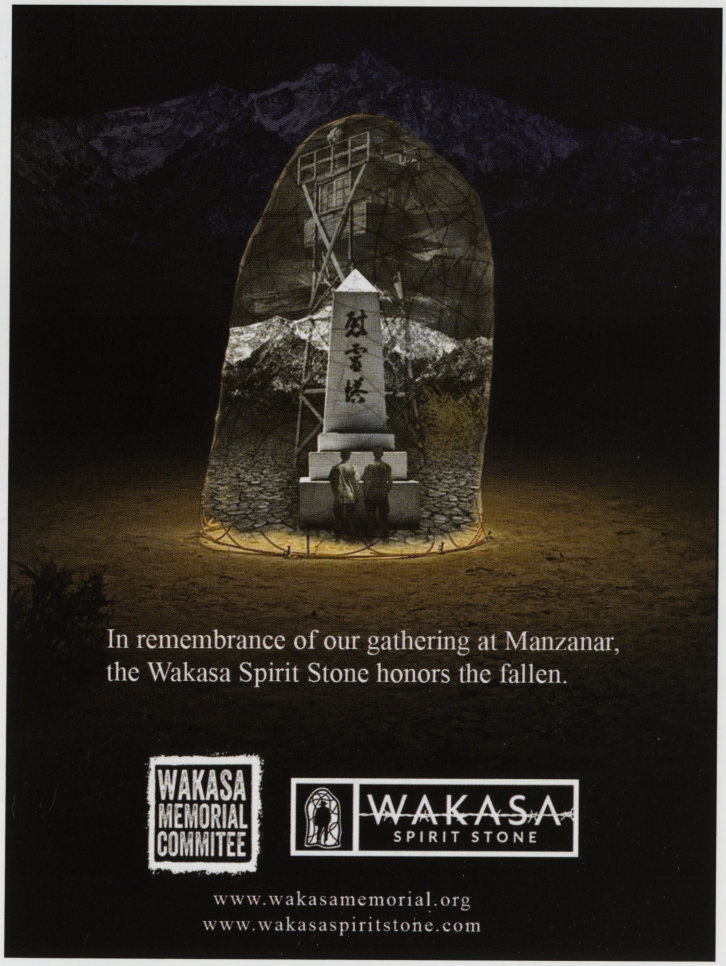

Honoring those of Manzanar

Manzanar to Mount Whitney
The Life and Times of a Lost Hiker
Hank Umemoto
Manzanar to Mount Whitney
The Life and Times of a Lost Hiker

Beloved Father and Author

The Hank Umemoto Family

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The Grateful Crane Ensemble Thanks the Manzanar Committee for Keeping this Story Alive.

In memory of our friend, Kurt Kuniyoshi.

GRATEFUL CRANE ENSEMBLE

PERFORMING OUT OF GRATITUDE

JACL NATIONAL 1929 SECURITY THROUGH UNITY

Venice-West
Los Angeles Chapter
Japanese American
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Salutes

The Manzanar Committee's
57th Annual
Manzanar Pilgrimage

CLUE recognizes the Manzanar Committee, in observation of the 57th Annual Manzanar Pilgrimage.

Thank you for being partners in building a more just and sacred society.

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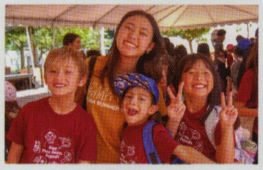
cluejustice.org

Congratulations

to the Manzanar Committee

on their 57th Annual Manzanar Pilgrimage!



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Greetings from the Florin Manzanar Pilgrimage & Culture Exchange!

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facebook: cairsacramento

Florin JACL - Sacramento Valley
facebook: florinjacl

AkaMya Culture Group (Big Pine)
facebook: AkaMyaCulturalDanceGroup

2025 Culture Exchange with Native, Muslim, and Japanese Americans (photo by AkaMya)

2026 Florin Manzanar Pilgrimage Leadership Team: Haneen Abu Tawila (CAIR), Omar Altamimi (CAIR), Madeline Do, Judy Fukuman, Paul Hironaka, Michelle Huey, Josh Kaizuka, Krista Keplinger, Heather Koike, Jennifer Kubo, Koji Lo, Wren Nishio, Andy Noguchi, Rumi and Mana Nozue, Lisa Shigenaga, Fumie Shimada, Twila Tomita, Titus Toyama, Donna K. Toyama, Marielle Tsukamoto, Gregory Wada

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2024 AREAA LA COASTAL PRESIDENT

A sincere
Thank you
Jonathan Lee

Jonathan Lee has been a member of the Manzanar Committee since 1989 and has served as the Committee's videographer for nearly 35 years. His contribution has left a valuable legacy of documentation for future generations. Congratulations on retiring.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Phillip Masaji Iwata (1920-1994)
Midori Kunitomi Iwata (1925-2001)

Prayers for my beloved parents and the Iwata and Kunitomi ancestors, who carried on the cultural ethos of the Nikkei community in Los Angeles. A home and store in Little Tokyo. A farm in the San Fernando Valley. A family in the Crenshaw District. Summer festivals, Koyasan Temple picnics, *Oshogatsu*. Fishing, basketball, baseball. Pilgrimages to Manzanar and the family rice farms in Japan. Their spirits live in our history and traditions.

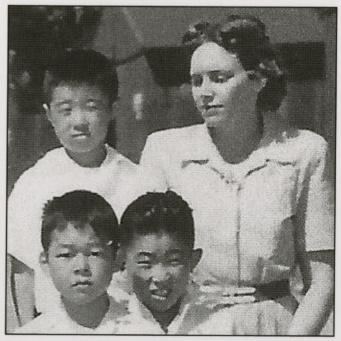
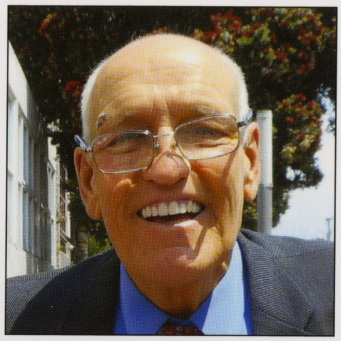
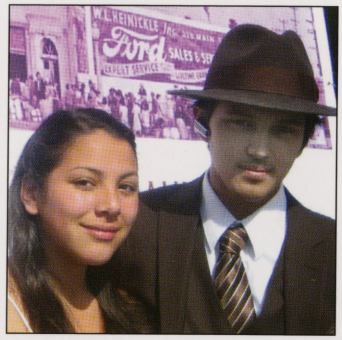
— Edward Iwata

"Of Deserts and Rice Farms" in *Journeys Home: Inspiring Stories to Find Your Family History* (National Geographic & Random House, 2015)

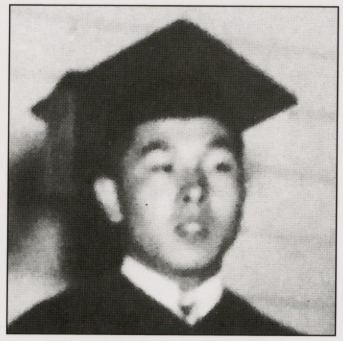
Edward.iwata@yahoo.com
Twitter: @EdwardIwata

The Venice Japanese American Memorial Monument Committee Congratulates the Manzanar Committee on its

57th ANNUAL MANZANAR PILGRIMAGE

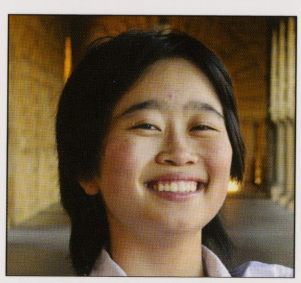
We pay tribute to those we lost, in appreciation for what they accomplished in their lifetimes.



Clockwise from top left: Fred Hoshiyama, Topaz, Utah incarceree, VJAMM Committee advisor (2015); Yoshinori Tomita, lower left in Manzanar's third grade, VJAMM Committee Charter Member (January 2017); Bill Rosendahl, VJAMM Supporter, LA City Councilmember, District 3 (March 2017); Scott Ueda, Jr., author of 2009 Free Venice Beachhead article on the forced removal and incarceration (2019); Amy Takahashi Ioki, Malibu High School senior, Manzanar incarceree, VJAMM Committee advisor (June 2020); Arnold Tadao Maeda, Class President Manzanar High School, VJAMM Committee Charter Member (Sept 2020); Kay Brown, VJAMM Committee Charter Member (2022); Sam Shimoguchi, VJAMM Committee advisor (2023); Emily Winters, VJAMM Committee Charter Member (2024); Don Geagan, VJAMM Committee Charter Member (2025)

Congratulations to the 2026 Arnold Maeda Manzanar Pilgrimage Grant Recipients!

Dianne Chevez Hernandez
East Los Angeles College



Dan Bui Kubota
Stanford University

For Arnold Maeda Manzanar Pilgrimage Grant info, visit:
venicejamm.org, manzanarcommittee.org, facebook.com/Venicejamm

japanese american
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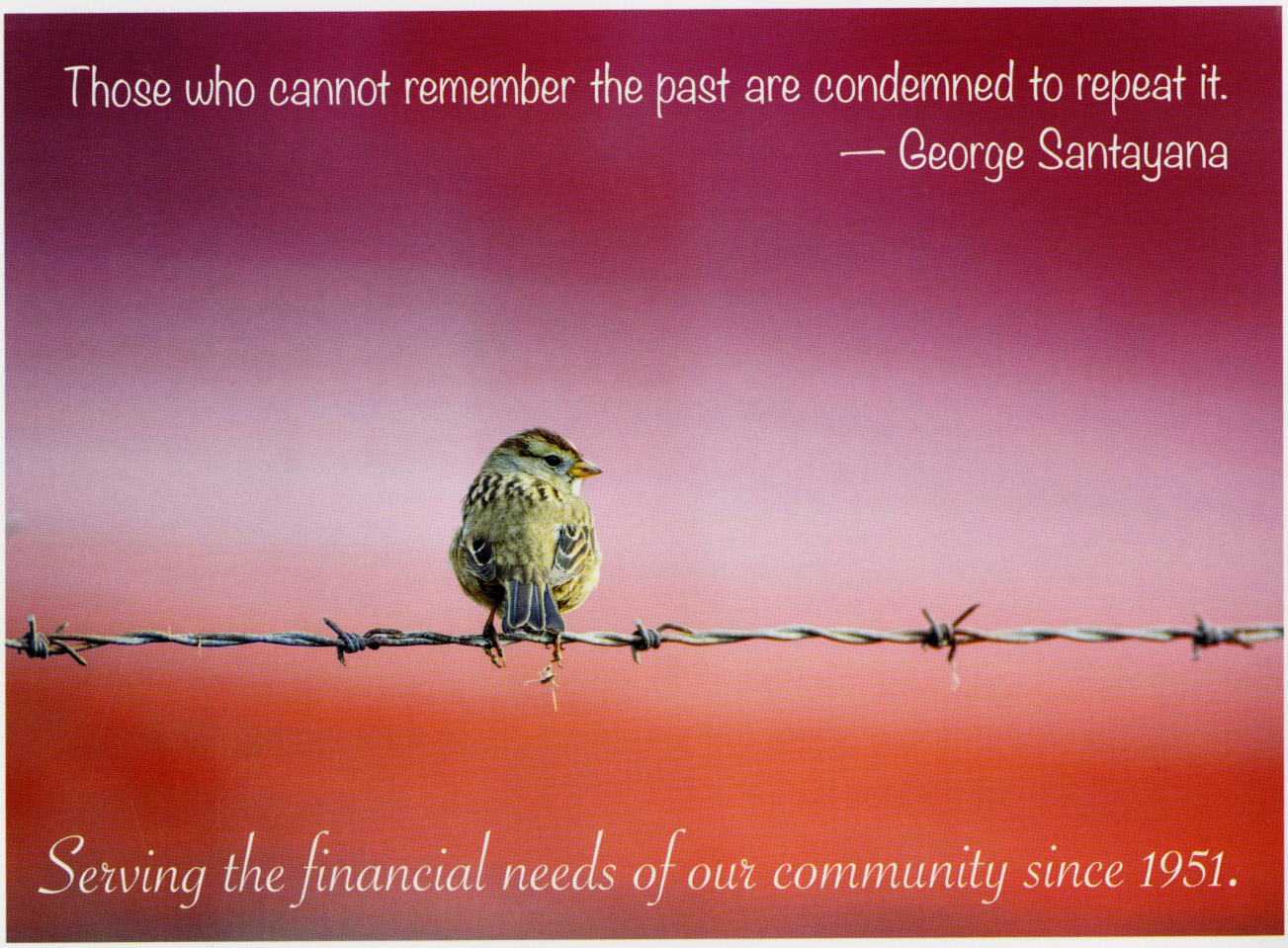
Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.
— George Santayana
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